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THE
Bishop of BANGOR'S
LATE
SERMON,
AND HIS
LETTER to Dr. SNAPE in
Defence of it,
ANSWER'D.

And the Dangerous Nature of some Doctrines
in his *Preservative*,

Set forth in a

Letter to his Lordship.

By WILLIAM LAW, M. A.

THE NINTH EDITION.

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My LORD,

THAT your Lordship may be prepared to receive what I here presume to lay before you, with the greater Candor, I sincerely profess, that it does not proceed from any Prejudice ; but from certain Reasons, upon which I find myself invincibly obliged to differ from your Lordship in Opinion.

To prevent all Suspicion of my designing any thing injurious to your Lordship's Character in this Address, I have prefixed, what otherwise I should have chosen to conceal, my Name to it.

Your Lordship is represented as at the Head of a Cause, where every Adversary is sure to be reproach'd, either as a furious Jacobite, or Popish Bigot, or an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and the Protestant Cause. These hard Names are to be expected, my Lord, from a Set of Men who dishonour your Lordship with their Panegyricks upon your Performances ;

formances ; whose Praises defile the Character they would adorn.

When Dr. *Snape* represents your Lordship as no Friend to the good Orders, and necessary Institutions of the Church, you complain of the ill Arts of an Adversary, who sets you out in false Colours, perverts your Words on purpose to increase his own *Imaginary Triumphs*. But, my Lord, in this, Dr. *Snape* only thinks with those who would be counted your best Friends ; and would no longer be your Friends, but that they conclude, you have declared against the Authority of the Church. Does your Lordship suppose, that the *T——ds*, the *H——ks*, the *B——ts*, would be at so much Expence of Time and Labour, to justify, commend and enlarge upon your Lordship's Notions, if they did not think you engaged in their Cause ? There is not a Libertine, or Loose-Thinker in *England*, but he imagines you intend to dissolve the Church as a *Society*, and are ready to offer Incense to your Lordship for so meritorious a Design. It is not my Intention to reproach your Lordship with their Esteem, or to involve you in the Guilt of their Schemes ; but to shew, that an Adversary does not need any Malice to make him believe you no Friend to the Constitution of the Church, as a Regular Society, since your greatest Admirers every Day publish it by necessary Construction to the World in Print. After

After a Word or two concerning a Passage in your Lordship's *Preservative*, I shall proceed to consider your Answer to Dr. Snape. In the 98th Page you have these Words: *But when you are secure of your Integrity before God, — this will lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of Regular Uninterrupted Successions, Authoritative Benedictions, Excommunications, — Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances to the People upon Account of Niceties and Trifles, or any other the like Dreams.*

My Lord, thus much must be implied here: Be not afraid of the Terrors of Men, who would persuade you of the Danger of being in this, or that Communion, and fright you into particular Ways of worshipping God, who would make you believe such Sacraments, and such Clergy, are necessary to recommend you to his Favour. For these, your Lordship affirms, we may condemn, if we be but secure of our Integrity.

So that if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of. This is a Proposition of an unfriendly Aspect to Christianity: But that it is entirely your Lordship's, is plain from what you declare, p. 90. *That every one may find it in his own Conduct to be true, that his Title to God's Favour can-*

not

not depend upon his actual being or continuing in any particular Method ; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience. Again, p. 91. *The Favour of God follows Sincerity, consider'd as such, and consequently equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* So that I hope I have not wrested your Lordship's Meaning, by saying, that, according to these Notions, if a Man be not a Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only sincere *Quakers, Ranters, Muggletonians,* and *Fifth Monarchy-Men,* are as much in the Favour of God, as any of the Apostles ; but likewise sincere *Jews, Turks* and *Deists,* are upon as good a Bottom, and as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian.

For your Lordship saith, it is *Sincerity*, as *such*, that procures the Favour of God. If it be *Sincerity*, as *such*, then it is *Sincerity* independent and exclusive of any particular Way of Worship : And if *the Favour of God equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity*, then it is impossible there should be any Difference, either as to Merit or Happiness, between a sincere *Martyr* and a sincere *Persecutor* ; and he that burns the Christian, if he be but in earnest, has the same Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in Christ.

Your

Your Lordship saith, you can't help it, if People will charge you with * *Evil Intentions* and *Bad Views*. I intend no such Charge : But I wonder, your Lordship should think it hard, that any one should infer from these Places, that you *are against the Interest of the Church of England*.

For, my Lord, cannot the *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, *Deists*, *Presbyterians*, assert you as much in their Interest as we can? Have you said any thing for us, or done any thing for us in this *Preservative*, but what you have equally done for them? Your Lordship is ours, as you fill a *Bishoprick* ; but we are at a loss to discover from this Discourse what other Interest we have in your Lordship : For you openly expose our Communion, and give up all the Advantages of it, by telling all sorts of People, if they are but sincere in their own Way, they are as much in God's Favour as any body else. Is this supporting our Interest, my Lord?

Suppose a Friend of King *George* should declare it to all *Britains* whatever, that though they were divided into Five thousand different Parties, to set up different *Pretenders* ; yet if they were but sincere in their Designs, they would be as much in the Favour of God, as

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those

* Answer, p. 46.

those who are most firmly attach'd to his *Majesty*. Does your Lordship think, such a one would be thought any great Friend to the Government? And, my Lord, is not this the Declaration you made as to the Church of *England*? Have you not told all Parties, that their Sincerity is enough? Have you said so much as one Word in Recommendation of our Communion: Or, if it was not for your Church-Character in the Title-Page of this Discourse, could any one alive conceive what Communion you was of? Nay, a Reader, that was a Stranger, would imagine, that he who will allow no Difference between Communions, is himself of no Communion. Your Lordship, for ought I know, may act according to the strictest Sincerity, and may think it your Duty to undermine the Foundations of the Church. I am only surprized, that you should refuse to own the Reasonableness of such a Charge.

Your Lordship hath cancell'd all our Obligations to any particular Communion, upon pretence of *Sincerity*.

I hope, my Lord, there is Mercy in store for all sorts of People, however erroneous in their Way of worshipping God; but cannot believe, that to be a sincere Christian, is to be no more in the Favour of God, than to be a sincere *Deist*, or a sincere *Destroyer* of Christians.

stians. It will be allowed, that Sincerity is a necessary Principle of true Religion ; and that without it, all the most specious Appearances of Virtue are nothing worth. But still, neither common Sense, nor plain Scripture, will suffer me to think, that when our Saviour was on Earth, they were as much in the Favour of God, who sincerely refused to be his Disciples, and sincerely called for his Crucifixion, as those who sincerely left all and followed him. If they were, my Lord, where is that Blessedness of Believing so often mentioned in the Scripture ? Or, where is the Happiness of the Gospel Revelation, if they are as well, who refuse it sincerely, as those who embrace it with Integrity ?

Our Saviour declared, that those who believed, should be saved ; but those who believed not, should be damned. Will your Lordship say, that all Unbelievers were insincere ; or, that though they were damned, they were yet in the same Favour with God, as those who were saved ?

The Apostle assures us, *that there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be saved, but Jesus Christ.* But your Lordship hath found out an Atonement, more universal than that of his Blood ; and which will even make those blessed and happy, who count it an *unholy Thing*. For

seeing it is *Sincerity, as such*, that alone recommends us to the Favour of God, they who sincerely persecute this Name, are in as good a Way, as those that sincerely worship it. Has God declared this to be the only Way to Salvation? How can your Lordship tell the World, that Sincerity will save them, be they in what Way they will? Is this all the Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction? Is this all the Advantage of the Gospel Covenant, that those who sincerely condemn it, are in as good a State without it, as those that embrace it?

My Lord, here is no Aggravation of your Meaning. If Sincerity, as such, be the only thing that recommends us to God, and every equal Degree of it procures an equal Degree of Favour; it is a Demonstration, that Sincerity *against* Christ is as pleasing to God, as Sincerity *for* him. My Lord, this is a Doctrine which no Words can enough decry. So I shall leave it, to consider what Opinion *St. Paul* had of this kind of Sincerity. He did not think, when he persecuted the Church, though he did it *ignorantly*, and in Unbelief, and out of Zeal towards God, that he was as much in the Favour of God, as when he suffer'd for Christ. *I am the least*, saith he, *of the Apostles, not fit to be called an Apostle; because I persecuted the Church of Christ.* The Apostle does not scruple to charge himself with Guilt, notwithstanding his Sincerity.

A little

A little Knowledge of human Nature will teach us, that our Sincerity may be often charged with Guilt ; not as if we were guilty because we are sincere ; but because it may be our Fault that we are hearty and sincere in such or such ill-grounded Opinions. It may have been from some ill Conduct of our own, some Irregularities, or Abuse of our Faculties, that we conceive things as we do, and are fixed in such and such Tenets. And can we think so much owing to a *Sincerity* in Opinions, contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour ? There are several faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Understandings, and throw themselves into a very odd Way of thinking ; for some Cause or other *God may send them a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye*. And will your Lordship say, that those who are thus sunk into Errors, it may be, through their own ill Conduct, or as a Judgment of God upon them, are as much in his Favour, as those that love and adhere to the Truth ? This, my Lord, is a shocking Opinion, and has given Numbers of Christians great Offence, as contradicting common Sense and plain Scripture ; as setting all Religion upon the Level, as to the Favour of God.

The next thing that, according to your Lordship, *we ought not to be concerned at, is,*
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the vain Words of Regular and Uninterrupted Successions, as Niceties, Trifles, and Dreams. Thus much surely is implied in these Words, that no kind of *Ordination* or *Mission* of the Clergy is of any Consequence or Moment to us. For if the Ordination need not be *Regular*, or derived from those who had Authority from Christ to Ordain, it is plain, that no one particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever can have any worse Defects, than as being *Irregular*, and not derived by a Succession from Christ. So that if these Circumstances are to be looked on as *Trifles* and *Dreams*, all the Difference that can be supposed betwixt any Ordinations, comes under the same Notion of *Trifles* and *Dreams*; and consequently, are either Good alike, or Trifling alike. So that *Quakers*, *Independents*, *Presbyterians*, according to your Lordship, have as much Reason to think their Teachers as useful to them, and as True Ministers of Christ, as those of the Episcopal Communion have to think their Teachers. For if *Regularity* of Ordination and *Uninterrupted Succession* be mere Trifles, and nothing; then all the Difference betwixt us and other Teachers, must be nothing: for they can differ from us in no other respects. So that, my Lord, if Episcopal Ordination, derived from Christ, hath been contended for by the Church of *England*, your Lordship hath in this Point deserted

ed her : And you not only give up Episcopal Ordination, by ridiculing a Succession ; but likewise by the same Argument exclude any *Ministers* on Earth from having Christ's Authority. For if there be not a Succession of Persons authorized from Christ to send others to act in his Name, then both Episcopal and Presbyterian Teachers are equally *Usurpers*, and as mere *Lay-men* as any at all. For there can't be any other Difference between the Clergy and Laity ; but as the one hath Authority derived from Christ, to perform Offices which the other hath not. But this Authority can be no otherwise had, than by an Uninterrupted Succession of Men from Christ, empower'd to qualify others. For if the Succession be once broke, People must either go into the Ministry of their own Accord, or be sent by such as have no more Power to send others, than to go themselves. And, my Lord, can these be called Ministers of Christ, or received as his Ambassadors ? Can they be thought to act in his Name, who have no Authority from him ? If so, your Lordship's Servant might Ordain and Baptize to as much purpose as your Lordship : For it could only be objected to such Actions, that they had no Authority from Christ. And if there be no Succession of Ordainers from him, every one is equally qualified to Ordain. My Lord, I should think it might be granted me, that the Administring of a Sacrament is an Action we
have

have no Right to perform, consider'd either as Men, Gentlemen, or Scholars, or Members of a Civil Society. Who then can have any Authority to interpose, but he that has it from Christ? And how that can be had from him, without a Succession of Men from him, is not easily conceiv'd. Should a private Person chuse a Lord Chancellor, and declare his Authority good; would there be any thing but Absurdity, Impudence and Presumption in it? But why he cannot as well commission a Person to act, sign and seal in the King's Name, as in the Name of Christ, is unaccountable.

My Lord, it is a plain and obvious Truth, that no Man, or Number of Men, consider'd as such, can any more make a Priest, or commission a Person to officiate in Christ's Name, *as such*, than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, or add a New Sacrament for the Conveyance of spiritual Advantages. The Ministers of Christ are as much positive *Ordinances*, as the Sacraments; and we might as well think, that Sacraments not instituted by him, might be Means of Grace, as those pass for his Ministers, who have no Authority from him.

Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Christ, or they are not. If they are, then every one may Preach, Baptize, Ordain, &c. If all things are not thus common,

common, but the Administ'ring of the Sacrament, and Ordination, &c. are Offices appropriated to particular Persons ; then I desire to know, how in this present Age, or any other since the Apostles, Christians can know their respective Duties, or what they may, or may not do, with respect to the several Acts of Church-Communion, if there be no *Uninterrupted Succession* of Authorized Persons from Christ : For 'till Authority from Christ appears, to make a Difference between them, we are all alike ; and any one may officiate as well as another. To make a Jest therefore of the *Uninterrupted Succession*, is to make a Jest of Ordination ; to destroy the sacred Character, and make all Pretenders to it, as good as those that are sent by Christ.

If there be no *Uninterrupted Succession*, then there are no Authoriz'd Ministers from Christ ; if no such Ministers, then no Christian Sacraments ; if no Christian Sacraments, then no Christian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the Stated and Visible Seals.

My Lord, this is all your own. Here are no Consequences palm'd upon you ; but the first, plain, and obvious Sense of your Lordship's Words — and yet, after all, your Lordship asks Dr. *Snape*, *Why all these Outcries against you* * ? Indeed, my Lord, you
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* Answer, p. 40.

have only taken the main Supports of our Religion away : You have neither left us Priests, nor Sacraments, nor Church : Or, what is the same thing, you have made them all *Trifles* and *Dreams*. And what has your Lordship given us in the room of all these Advantages ? Why, only *Sincerity* : This is the great Universal Atonement for all. This is that, which, according to your Lordship, will help us to the Communion of Saints hereafter, though we are in Communion with any body, or no body here.

The next Thing we are not to be afraid of, are, *The vain Words of Nullity and Validity of God's Ordinances*, i. e. whether they are administer'd by a Clergyman or a Layman. This indeed I have shewn was included in what you said about the Trifle of *Uninterrupted Succession*. But, for fear we should have over-looked it there, you have given it us in express Words in the next Line.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, That *you know no Confusion*, Glorious or Inglorious, *that you have endeavoured to introduce* into the Church †.

My Lord, If I may presume to repeat your own Words, *Lay your Hand on your Heart, and ask yourself*, Whether the encouraging all
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manner of Divisions, be not endeavouring to introduce Confusion? If there were in *England* Five thousand different Sects, has not your Lordship persuaded them to be content with themselves; not to value what they are told by other Communions; That if they are but sincere, they need not have regard to any thing else? Is not this to introduce Confusion? What is Confusion, but Difference and Division? And does not your Lordship plainly declare to the World, that there is no need of uniting? That there is no particular Way or Method, that can recommend us more to the Favour of God, than another? Has your Lordship so much as given the least Hint, that it is better to be in the Communion of the Church of *England*, than not? Have you not exposed her Sacraments and Clergy; and, as much as lay in you, broke down every thing in her, that distinguishes her from Fanatical Conventicles? What is there in her, as a Church, that you have left untouch'd? What have you left in her, that can any way invite others into her Communion? Are her Clergy authorized more than others? For fear that should be thought, you make a Regular Succession from Christ, a *Trifle*. Are her Sacraments more regularly administer'd? Lest that should recommend her, you slight the *Nullity or Validity of God's Ordinances*. Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoin Communion with her? Lest this should

be believed, you tell us, that our being or continuing in any particular Method (or particular Communion) cannot recommend us more to the Favour of God than another.

I must observe to your Lordship, that these Opinions are very oddly put in a *Preservative from ill Principles*; or, *An Appeal to the Consciences and common Sense of the Laity*. Are they to be persuaded not to join with the Nonjurors, because no particular Priests, no particular Sacraments, no particular Communion, is any thing but a Dream and Trifle; and such things as no way recommend us to the Favour of God more than others? Are the Nonjurors only thus to be answer'd? Is the Establish'd Church only thus to be defended? Your Lordship indeed has not minced the Matter: But, I hope, the Church of *England* is to be supported upon better Principles, or not at all.

If I should tell a Person that put a Case of Conscience to me, that all Cases of Conscience are Trifles, and signify nothing; it would be plain, that I had given him a direct Answer: But if he had either Conscience, or common Sense, he would seek out a better Confessor.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that he saith and unsaith, to the *great Diversion of the Roman*

Roman Cathalicks *. But if your Lordship would unsay some things you have said, it would be a greater Mortification to them, than all that ever you said or writ in your Life.

To deny the Necessity of any particular Communion, to expose the Validity of Sacraments, and rally upon the Uninterrupted Succession of Priests, and pull down every Pillar in the Church of Christ, is an Errand on which *Rome* hath sent many Messengers. And the Papists are no more provoked with your Lordship for these Discourses, than they were angry at *William Penn*, a reputed Jesuit, for preaching up *Quakerism*. So long as they rejoice in our Divisions, or are glad to see the City of God made a mere *Babel*, they can no more be angry at your Lordship, than at your Advocates.

Dr. *Snape* says, you represent the Church of Christ as a Kingdom, in which Christ neither acts himself, nor hath invested any one else with Authority to act for him. At this your Lordship cries, p. 22. *Lay your Hand upon your Heart, and ask, Is this a Christian, Human, Honest Representation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon?*

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* Answer, p. 46.

My Lord, I have dealt as sincerely with my Heart as it is possible ; and I must confess, I take the Doctor's Representation to be Christian and Honest. For though you sometimes contend against Absolute and Indispensible Authority ; yet it is plain, that you strike at all Authority, and assert, as the Doctor saith, that Christ hath not invested any one on Earth with an Authority to act for him.

Page 11. You expressly say, *That as to the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation, Christ hath left no Visible Human Authority behind him.*

Now, my Lord, is not this saying, that he has left no Authority at all ? For Christ came with no other Authority Himself but as to Conscience and Salvation, he erected a Kingdom which related to nothing but Conscience and Salvation : And therefore they who have no Authority as to Conscience and Salvation, have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. Conscience and Salvation are the only Affairs of that Kingdom.

Your Lordship denies, that any one has Authority in these Affairs ; and yet you take it ill to be charged with asserting, that Christ hath not invested any one with Authority for him. How can any one act for him, but in
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his Kingdom ? How can they act in his Kingdom, if they have nothing to do with Conscience and Salvation, when his Kingdom is concerned with nothing else ?

Again, Page 16. your Lordship saith, that no one of them (Christians) *any more than another, hath Authority either to make new Laws for Christ's Subjects, or to impose a Sense upon the old ones ; or to Judge, Censure, or Punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters purely relating to Conscience.*

I can meet with no Divine, my Lord, either Juror or Non-Juror, High or Low, Churchman or Dissenter, that does not think your Lordship has plainly asserted in these Passages, what the Doctor has laid to your Charge, *that no one is invested with Authority from Christ to act for him.*

Your Lordship thinks this is sufficiently answered, by saying, you contend against an Absolute Authority. You do indeed sometimes join Absolute with that Authority you disclaim. But, my Lord, it is still true, that you have taken all Authority from the Church : For the Reasons you every-where give against this Authority, conclude as strongly against any Degrees of Authority, as that which is truly Absolute.

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First, You disown the Authority of any Christians over other Christians, because they are the *Servants of another Master*, p. 16. Now this concludes as strongly against *any* Authority, as that which is *Absolute* : For no one can have the least Authority over those that are entirely under another's Jurisdiction. A small Authority over another's Servant, is as inconsistent as the greatest.

Secondly, You reject this Authority, because of the Objects it is exercised upon, *i. e.* Matters purely relating to Conscience and Salvation. Here this Authority is rejected, because it relates to *Conscience* and *Salvation* ; which does as well exclude every Degree of Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. For if Authority and Conscience cannot suit together, Conscience rejects Authority, *as such* ; and not because there is this or that Degree of it. So that this Argument banishes all Authority.

Thirdly, Your Lordship denies any Church Authority, because Christ doth not *interpose to convey Infallibility, to assert the true Interpretation of his own Laws* *. Now, this Reason concludes as full against *all* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. For if Infallibility is necessary to found an Obedience upon in Christ's

* Sermon, p. 15.

Christ's Kingdom, it is plain, that no body in Christ's Kingdom hath any Right to any Obedience from others, nor consequently any Authority to command it; no Members, or Number of Members of it, being infallible.

Fourthly, Another Reason your Lordship gives against Church-Authority, is this; *That it is the taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own*, p. 14. Now this Reason proves as much against Authority in general, or *any Degrees* of it, as that which is *Absolute*. For if the Authority of others is inconsistent with Christ's being King of his own Kingdom, then *every Degree* of Authority, so far as it extends, is an Invasion of so much of Christ's Authority, and usurping upon his Right.

The Reason likewise which your Lordship gives to prove the Apostles not Usurpers of Christ's Authority, plainly condemns every Degree of Authority which any Church can now pretend to. *They were no Usurpers, because he then interposed to convey Infallibility; and was in all that they ordained: So that the Authority was his in the strictest Sense* †. So that where he does not interpose to convey Infallibility, there every *Degree* of Authority is a *Degree* of Usurpation; and consequently, the present Church having no Infallibility, has

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no

† Answer, p. 38.

no Right to exercise the *least Degree* of Authority, without robbing Christ of his Prerogative.

Thus it plainly appears, that every Reason you have offered against Church-Authority, concludes with as much Strength against *all* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. And therefore Dr. *Snape* has done you no Injury in charging you with the Denial of *All* Authority.

There happens, my Lord, to be *only* this Difference between your Sermon and the Defence of it, that That is so many Pages against Church-Authority, *as such*, and This is a Confutation of the *Pope's Infallibility*. It is very strange, that so *clear a Writer*, who has been so long enquiring into the Nature of *Government*, should not be able to make himself be understood upon it: That your Lordship should be only preaching against the Pope; and yet *All the Lower House of Convocation* should unanimously conceive, that your Doctrine therein deliver'd, tended to *subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ*.

And, my Lord, it will appear from what follows, that your Lordship is even of the same Opinion yourself; and that you imagin'd, you had banish'd *all* Authority, *as such*,

such, out of the Church, by those Arguments you had offer'd against an *Absolute Authority*. This is plain from the following Passage, where you ridicule *that* which Dr. *Snape* took to be an *Authority*, though not *Absolute*. When Dr. *Snape* said, That no Church-Authority was to be obey'd in any thing contrary to the Reveal'd Will of God, your Lordship triumphs thus: *Glorious Absolute Authority indeed, in your own Account, to which Christ's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examin'd into his own Declarations; and then they obey not this Authority, but him* *.

Here you make nothing of that Authority which is not *Absolute*; and yet you think it hard to be told, that you have taken away all *Church-Authority*. That which is *Absolute*, you expressly deny; and here you say, that which is not *Absolute*, is nothing at all. Where then is the *Authority* you have left? Or how is it that Christ has impower'd any one to act in his Name?

Your Lordship fights safe under the Protection of the Word *Absolute*; but your Aim is at all Church-Power. And your Lordship makes too hasty an Inference, that because it is not *Absolute*, it is none at all. If you ask, Where you have made this Inference, it is on occasion of the above-mentioned Triumph;

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where

* Answer, p. 27.

where your Lordship makes it an insignificant Authority, which is only to be obey'd so long as it is not contrary to Scripture.

Your Lordship seems to think all is lost, as to Church-Power ; because the Doctor does not claim an *Absolute one*, but allows it to be subject to Scripture : As if *all* Authority was *Absolute*, or else nothing at all. I shall therefore consider the Nature of this Church-Power, and shew, that though it is not *Absolute*, yet it is a *Real Authority*, and is not such a mere Notion as your Lordship makes it.

An *Absolute Authority*, according to your Lordship is, what is to be always obeyed by every Individual that is subject to it, in all Circumstances. This is an Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I presume, there may be an *Authority* inferior to this, which is nevertheless a *Real Authority*, and is to be esteemed as such, and that for these Reasons :

First, I hope it will be allowed me, that our Saviour came into the World with Authority. But it was not lawful for the *Jews* to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to those Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures. May not I here say, my Lord, *Glorious Authority*
of

of Christ indeed, to which the Jews owed no Obedience, till they had examin'd their Scriptures; and then they obey, not Him, but Them !

Again ; The Apostles were sent into the World with Authority : But yet, those who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unsuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were obliged not to obey them. *Glorious Authority indeed of the Apostles, to whom Mankind owed no Obedience, till they had first examined their own Notions of God and Religion ; and then they obeyed, not the Apostles, but Them.*

I hope, my Lord, it may be allow'd, that the Sacraments are Real Means of Grace : But it is certain they are only *conditionally* so, if those that partake of them are endowed with suitable Dispositions of Piety and Virtue. *Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, which is only obtained by such pious Dispositions ; and then it is owing to the Dispositions, and not the Sacraments.* Now, my Lord, if there can be such a thing as instituted *Real* Means of Grace, which are only *conditionally* apply'd, I cannot see, why there may not be an instituted Real Authority in the Church, which is only to be *conditionally* obeyed.

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Your Lordship has written a great many Elaborate Pages to prove the *English* Government Limited ; and that no Obedience is due to it, but whilst it preserves our Fundamentals ; and, I suppose, the People are to judge for themselves, whether these are safe, or not. *Glorious Authority of the English Government, which is to be obey'd no longer than the People think it their Interest to obey it !*

Will your Lordship say, There is *no Authority* in the *English* Government, because only a *conditional Obedience* is due to it, whilst we think it supports our Fundamentals ? Why then must the *Church-Authority* be reckoned nothing at all, because only a *Rational Conditional Obedience* is to be paid, whilst we think it not contrary to Scripture ? Is a Limited, Conditional Government in the State, such a Wise, Excellent, and Glorious Constitution ? And is the same Authority in the Church, such Absurdity, Nonsense, and nothing at all, as to any actual Power ?

If there be such a thing as Obedience upon Rational Motives, there must be such a thing as Authority that is not Absolute, or that does not require a *Blind, Implicit Obedience*. Indeed, Rational Creatures can obey no other Authority ; they must have Reasons for what they do. And yet because the
Church

Church claims only this *Rational* Obedience, your Lordship explodes *such* Authority as none at all.

Yet it must be granted, that *no other* Obedience was due to the *Prophets*, or our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* : They were only to be obey'd by those who Thought their Doctrines *worthy* of God. So that if the Church has *no* Authority, because we must first consult the Scriptures before we obey it ; neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, had *any Authority*, because the *Jews* were first to consult their Scriptures, and the *Heathens* their Reason, before they obey'd 'em. And yet this is all that is said against *Church-Authority* ; That because they are to judge of the *Lawfulness* of its Injunctions, therefore they owe it no Obedience : Which false Conclusion I hope is enough exposed.

If we think it unlawful to do any thing that the Church requires of us, we must not obey its Authority. So, if we think it unlawful to submit to any Temporal Government, we are not to comply. But, I hope, it will not follow, that the Government has *no Authority*, because some think it unlawful to comply with it. If we are so unhappy as to judge wrong in any Matter of Duty, we must nevertheless act according to our Judgments ; and the Guilt of Disobedience either

in *Church* or *State*, is more or less, according as our Error is more or less voluntary, and occasioned by our own Mismanagement.

I believe I have shewn, First, That all your Lordship's Arguments against *Church-Authority*, conclude with the same Force against *all* Degrees of Authority : Secondly, That though *Church-Authority* be not Absolute in a *certain Sense* ; yet if our Saviour and his Apostles had any Authority, the Church may have a *Real Authority* : For neither he, nor his Apostles, had *such* an *Absolute* Authority, as excludes all *Consideration* and *Examination* : Which is your Notion of *Absolute* Authority.

Before I leave this Head, I must observe, that in this very Answer to Dr. *Snape*, where you would be thought to have exposed *this Absolute Authority alone*, you exclude *all* Authority along with it. You ask the Doctor *, *Is this the whole you can make of it, after all your boasted Zeal for Mere Authority ?* You then say, *Why may not I be allowed to say, No Man on Earth hath an Absolute Authority, as well as you ?* My Lord, there can be no understanding of this, unless *Mere Authority* and *Absolute Authority* be taken for the same thing by your Lordship.

But,

* Answer, p. 26.

But, my Lord, is not the smallest *Particle* of Matter, *Mere Matter*? And is it therefore the same as the *Whole Mass* of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is *Mere Space*, the same as *Infinite Space*? How comes it then, that *Mere Authority* is the same as *Absolute Authority*? My Lord, *Mere Authority* implies *only Authority*, as a *Mere Man* implies *only a Man*: But your Lordship makes no Difference between *this*, and *Absolute Authority*; and therefore hath left *no Authority* in the Church, unless there be *Authority*, that is not *Mere Authority*, i. e. Matter that is not *Mere Matter*; or Space that is not *Mere Space*.

When the Church enjoins Matters of Indifference, is she obeyed for any Reason, but for her *Mere Authority*? But your Lordship allows no Obedience to *Mere Authority*; and therefore no Obedience even in Indifferent Matters.

Thus do these Arguments of yours lay all waste in the Church: And I must not omit *one*, my Lord, which falls as heavy upon the *State*, and makes all *Civil Government* unlawful. Your Words are these: *As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King; and in this it is imply'd, that He is the sole Law-giver to his Subjects,*
E and

and Himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation. If there be any Truth or Force in this Argument, it concludes with the same Truth and Force against all Authority in the Kingdoms of this World. In Scripture we are told, the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, (Dan. iv. 17.) that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) Now, if because Christ is King of the Church, it must be in this imply'd, that he is sole Law-giver to his Subjects; it is plain to a Demonstration, that because God is King and Law-giver to the whole Earth, that therefore He is sole Law-giver to his Subjects; and consequently, that all Civil Authority, all Human Laws, are mere Invasions and Usurpations upon God's Authority, as King of the whole Earth.

Is no body to have any Jurisdiction in *Christ's Kingdom*, because He is King of it? How then comes any one to have any Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World, when God has declared himself the *Law-giver*, and King of the whole World? Will your Lordship say, that Christ hath left us the *Scriptures*, as the *Statute-Laws* of his Kingdom, to prevent the Necessity of *After-Laws*? It may be answer'd, That God has given us *Reason* for our constant Guide; which, if it were as duly attended to, would as certainly
answer

answer the *Ends* of *Civil Life*, as the Observance of the Scriptures would make us good Christians.

But, my Lord, as human Nature, if left to itself, would neither answer the *Ends* of a *Spiritual* or *Civil Society*; so a *constant Visible Government* in both, is *equally necessary*: And, I believe, it appears to all unprejudiced Eyes, that in this Argument *at least*, your Lordship has declared both *equally Unlawful*.

Your Lordship saith †, *The Exclusion of the Papists from the Throne, was not upon the Account of their Religion*. Three Lines after you say, *I have contended indeed elsewhere, that it was their unhappy Religion which alone made them incapable in themselves, of governing this Protestant Nation by the Laws of the Land*. My Lord, I can't reconcile these two Passages. *Popery alone*, you say, was their *Incapacity*. From which it may be inferred, they had *no other Incapacity*. Yet your Lordship saith, They were not excluded upon the Account of their *Religion*. A little after you say, *The Ground of their Exclusion was not their Religion, consider'd as such; but the Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects of it upon themselves to our Destruction*.

As for Instance, your Lordship may mean thus: If a *Man* of a *great Estate* dies, he loses his *Right* to his Estate; not upon the Account of *Death*, consider'd *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself. Or, suppose a Person be excluded for being an *Idiot*; it is not for his Idiocy, consider'd *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself to our Destruction.

My Lord, this is prodigious deep: I wish it be clear; or, that it be not too refined a Notion for common Use on this Subject. Likewise I do not conceive, my Lord, what you can call the *Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects* of any one's Religion. I am sure, among *Protestants* there are no *Natural, Certain Effects* of their Religion upon them; that their Practices don't *Fatally* follow their Principles: Neither is there any demonstrative Certainty, that a *Bishop* cannot be against *Episcopacy*.

If the *Papists* are so *unalterably sincere* in their Religion, that we can prove their *certain* Observation of it, it's pity but they had our Principles, and we had their Practice. I have not that good Opinion of the *Papists*, which your Lordship hath: I believe several of them sit as loose to their Religion, *as other Folks*.

Does

Does your Lordship think, that all *Papists* are alike? That natural Temper, Ambition and Education, don't make as much Difference amongst them, as the *same things* do amongst us? Are all *Protestants* loose and libertine alike? Why should all *Papists* be the same Zealots? If not, my Lord, then these *Effects* you call *Fatal*, *Natural*, and *Certain*, may be not to be depended upon.

Your Lordship knows, that it was generally believed, that King *Charles* the Second was a *Papist*: But I never heard of any *Fatal*, *Natural*, and *Certain Effects* of his Religion upon him. All that one hears of it is, that he liv'd like a *Protestant*, and dy'd like a *Papist*. I suppose your Lordship will allow, that several who were lately *Papists*, are now true *Protestants*. I desire therefore to know, what is become of the *Fatal*, *Certain*, and *Natural Effects* of their Religion?

My Lord, I beg of you to lay your Hand again upon your Heart, and ask, Whether this be strict Reasoning? Whether it is possible in the very Nature of the thing, that such *Fatal*, *Natural*, and *Certain Effects* should follow such a Giddy, Whimsical, Uncertain Thing, as *Human and Free Choice*? My Lord, is it neither possible for *Papists* to change or conceal their Religion for Interest,
or

or leave it through a conscientious Conviction? If the former is impossible, then, according to your Lordship, it is the *safest Religion* in the World; because they are all sure of being *sincere*, and consequently, the First Favourites of God. If the latter is impossible, then a great many fine Sermons and Discourses have been written to as wise Purposes, as if they had been directed to the Wind.

I come now to your Lordship's Definition of *Prayer*, a *Calm and Undisturbed Address to God*. It seems very strange, that so great a Master of Words as your Lordship, should pick out Two so very exceptionable, that all your Lordship's Skill could not defend them, but by leaving their first and obvious Sense. Who would not take *Calm and Undisturbed* to be very like *Quiet and Unmoved*? Yet your Lordship dislikes those Expressions. But if these do not give us a true *Idea* of *Prayer*, you have made a very narrow Escape, and have given us a Definition of *Prayer* as near to a *wrong one* as possible.

Prayer chiefly consisteth of *Confession* and *Petition*. Now, to be *Calm*, and free from all *worldly Passions*, is a necessary Temper to the right Discharge of such Duties: But why our *Confession* must be so *Calm*, and free from all *Perturbation* of Spirit; why our *Petitions* may not have all that Fervour and Warmth,
with

with which either *Nature* or *Grace* can supply them, is very surprizing.

My Lord, we are advifed to be *Dead to the World*; and I humbly fuppofe, no more is implied in it, than to keep our Affections from being too much engaged in it; and that a *Calm, Undifturbed*, i. e. *Diffaffionate* Ufe of the World is very *confiftent* with our being dead to it. If fo, then this *Calm, Undifturbed Address to Heaven*, is a kind of *Prayer* that is very confiftent with our being *dead to Heaven*.

We are forbid to *love* the World; and yet no greater *Abftraction* from it is required, than to ufe it *Calm and Undifturb'd*. We are commanded to *fet our Affections on Things above*; and yet, according to your Lordfhip, the *same Calm, Undifturbed Temper is enough*. According to this therefore we are to be *affected*, or rather *unaffected* alike, with *this* and the *next* World; fince we are to be *Calm and Undifturb'd* with refpect to *both*.

The Reason your Lordfhip offers for this *Definition* of Prayer, is this; becaufe you * *look upon Calmnefs and Undifturbednefs to be the Ornament and Defence of human Underftanding in all its Actions*. My Lord, this plainly fuppofes, there is no fuch thing as the
Right

* Answer, p. 11,

Right Use of our *Passions*: For if we could ever use them to any Advantage, then it could not be the Ornament of our Nature to be *dispassionate alike* in *all* its Actions. It is as much the Ornament and Defence of our Nature, to be differently *affected* with Things according to their *respective* Differences, as 'tis to understand or conceive *different Things* according to their real Difference. It would be no Ornament or Credit to us, to conceive no Difference betwixt a *Mountain* and a *Mole-Hill*: And our Rational Nature is as much disgraced, when we are no more *affected* with *great* Things than with *small*. It is the Essential Ornament of our Nature, to be as sensibly *affected* in a different Manner with the different Degrees of Goodness of Things, as 'tis to perceive exactly the different *Natures* or Relations of Things. *Passion* is no more a Crime, *as such*, than the *Understanding* is, *as such*. 'Tis nothing but mistaking the *Value* of Objects, that makes it criminal. An *Infinite Good* cannot be too *passionately* desir'd, nor a *Real Evil* too *vehemently* abhorr'd. *Mere Philosophy*, my Lord, would teach us, that the Dignity of *Human Nature* is best declared by a *Pungent Uneasiness* for the *Misery* of Sin, and a *passionate warm Application* to Heaven for Assistance.

Let us now consult the Scripture. St. *Paul* describes a *godly Sorrow* something different from

from your Lordship's *Calm* and *Undisturbed Temper*, in these Words: *When ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you! Yea, what Indignation, yea, what Fear, yea, what Zeal, yea, what Revenge!* (2 Cor. vii. 11.) My Lord, I suppose *these* are not so many Words for *Calm* and *Undisturbed*. Yet, as different as they are, the Apostle makes them the *Qualities* of a *godly Sorrow*. And all this, at the Expence of that *Calmness* which your Lordship terms the *Ornament* of human Nature. Dr. *Snape* pleads for the *Fervency* and *Ardour* of our Devotions, from our *Saviour's* *praying more earnestly* before his *Passion*.

Your Lordship replies, that *this* can give no Directions as to our *daily Prayers*; because it was what our *Saviour* himself knew nothing of, but this once. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* knew nothing of this way of Reasoning. For, as an Argument for *daily Patience*, he bids us look to *Jesus*, who endured the *Cross*, because he died for us, leaving us an *Example*.

Our Saviour, my Lord, *suffered* and *died* but *once*; yet is it made a Reason for our *daily Patience*, and proposed as an Example for us to imitate.

If therefore, my Lord, his Passion, so *extraordinary* in itself, and as much above the Power of human Nature to bear, as the *Intenseness* of his Devotions *exceeded* our Capacities for Prayer, be yet proposed as an *Example* to us in the *ordinary* Calamities of Life; how comes it, that *his Devotion* at that time should have no manner of Use or Direction in it as to our Devotions, especially in our *Distress*? How comes it, that his Suffering should have so much of Example in it, so much to be imitated; but the Manner of his *Devotion* then have nothing of Instruction, nothing that need be imitated by us? All the Reason that is offer'd, is the *Singularity* and *Extraordinariness* of it, when the same may be said of his *Passion*; yet that is allowed to be an *Example*.

Your Lordship is pleas'd, for the Information of your *Unwary Readers*, to reason thus upon the Place: *If this be the Example of our Saviour*, to assure us of his *Will about the Temper necessary to Prayer*, it will follow, that our *Blessed Lord Himself* never truly prayed before this time: And yet again, if he prayed more earnestly, it will follow, that he had prayed before; and consequently, that this *Temper in which He now was*, was not necessary to Prayer.

My

My Lord, one would think this Elaborate Proof was against something asserted. Here you have indeed a thorough Conquest ; but it is over *no body*. For did any one ever assert, that such *Extraordinary Earnestness* was *necessary* to Prayer ? Does Dr. *Snape*, or any Divines, allow of no Prayers, except we sweat *Drops of Blood* ? Will your Lordship say, that the *Necessity* of this Temper is imply'd in the Quotation of this Text, as a Direction for Prayer ? I answer, just as much as we are all obliged to die upon the *Cross*, because his *Sufferings* there are proposed to us as an *Example*.

The plain Truth of the Matter, my Lord, I take to be this : Our *Saviour's Sufferings* on the Cross were such as no Mortal can undergo ; yet they are justly proposed as an *Example* to us to bear with Patience such Sufferings as are within the Compass of human Nature. His earnest Devotion before this Passion, far *exceeded* any *Fervours* which the Devoutest of Mankind can attain to ; Yet it is justly proposed to us as an *Example*, to excite us to be as fervent as we can ; and may be justly alledg'd in our Defence, when our *warm* and *passionate* Addresses to God in our Calamities, are condemned as *superstitious Folly*. My Lord, must nothing be an *Example*, but what we can exactly come up to ?

How then can the *Life* of our *Saviour*, which was entirely free from *Sin*, be an Example to us? How could it be said in the Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*? Can any one be *Holy* as *God* is?

My Lord, one might properly urge the *Practice* of the Primitive Christians, who parted with *all* they had for the Support of their *Indigent Brethren*, as an Argument for Charity, without designing to oblige People to part with all they have. And *be* that should, in answer to such an Argument, tell the World, that *Charity* is only a *calm, undisturb'd Good Will to all Mankind*, would just as much set forth the *true Doctrine of Charity*, as He that defines Prayer to be a *calm and undisturb'd Address to Heaven*, for no other Reason, but because no *certain Degrees* of Fervour or Affection are necessarily required to constitute Devotion. My Lord, has *Charity* nothing to do with the *Distribution of Alms*, because no certain Allowance is fixed? Why then must *Prayer* have nothing to do with *Heat* and *Fervency*, because no fixed Degrees of it are necessary?

Therefore, my Lord, as I would define *Charity* to be a pious Distribution of so much of our Goods to the Poor, as is suitable to our Circumstances; so I would define *Prayer*, an *Address to Heaven, enliven'd with such Degree*

degrees of Fervour and Intenfeness, as our Natural Temper, influenc'd with a true Sense of God, could beget in us.

Your Lordship fays, you only desire to strike at the Root of *superstitious Folly*, and *establiſh Prayer in its room*; and this is to be effected by making our Addreſſes *calm and undiſturb'd*: By which we are to underſtand, a *Freedom from Heat and Paſſion*, as your Lordſhip explains it, by an Application to yourſelf.

If therefore any one ſhould happen to be ſo *diſturb'd* at his Sins, as to offer a *broken and contrite Heart* to God, inſtead of one *calm and undiſturb'd*; or, like holy *David*, his Soul ſhould be athiſt for God, or pant after him, as the *Hart panteth after the Water-brooks*, this would not be *Prayer*, but *ſuperſtitious Folly*.

My Lord, *Calmneſs of Temper*, as it ſignifies a Power over our *Paſſions*, is a *happy Circumſtance* of a *Rational Nature*, but no farther: When the Object is well choſen, there is no Danger in the Purſuit.

The *Calmneſs* your Lordſhip hath deſcribed, is fit for a *Philosopher* in his *Study*, who is ſolving *Mathematical Problems*. But if he ſhould come abroad into the World, thus entirely

tirely empty of all Passion, he would live to as much Purpose, as if he had left his Understanding behind him.

What a fine Subject, my Lord, would such a one make, who, when he heard of *Plots, Invasions, and Rebellions*, would continue as *calm* and *undisturb'd*, as when he was *comparing Lines and Figures*? Such a calm Subject would scarce be taken for any *Great Loyalist*.

Your Lordship, in other Places, hath recommended an *open* and *undisguised Zeal**, and told us such things as ought to *alarm the coldest Heart*†. Sure, my Lord, this is somewhat more than *Calm* and *Undisturb'd*: And will your Lordship, who hath expressed so much Concern for this *Ornament and Defence of human Understanding*, persuade us to part with the least Degree of it upon any Account? I am, my Lord, (with all Respect that is due to your Lordship's Station and Character)

Your most Humble and

Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

* Sermon 5th Nov. p. 5.

† Sermon, p. 14.

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